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AGNES HARCOURT,

OR

"FOR HIS SAKE"

A Canadian story illustrative of the power
of a child's life.

Reprinted from *Woman's Work in Canada*.

Montreal.

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1879.

PREFACE.

This story has been written and published in the hope of increasing the interest already taken in the little English emigrants brought out to Canada under Christian supervision.

This story though fictitious, is representative of the life and influence of many a little girl adopted into the families of our Canadian homes.

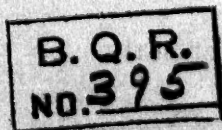
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Agnes Harcourt,

OR

“FOR HIS SAKE.”

CHAPTER I.

LONDON seemed more than ever like a huge human sea, moaning and troubled, and like a troubled sea when it beats upon a muddy shore, casting up mire and dirt; this was especially true of the East end. An almost imperceptible rain had been falling for days, but now the heavy leaden clouds seemed exhausted, even too much so to move off, and hung like a funeral pall over the city. Though no rain was falling, the streets, the houses, the sign-boards, all dripped in a melancholy, hopeless way as if they always did so and would continue to do so forever. In perfect harmony with the day and place was a little figure crouching against a projection of a building, which

the ghastly glare of gaslight falling on the sidewalk from its windows, declared to all observers that place a tavern ; the light had attracted the child, not with any stirring of hope, for she knew too well that from that door came only misery. Now and then a woman all in rags and wretchedness, came out and passed on ; yet still the child lingered, so still, so apparently seeking no one, going nowhere, that she attracted the attention of a policeman who was passing. "Move on, move on." came instinctively to his lips ; but as the little figure stirred to go he looked down upon her. A child we called her ! was it a child's face that looked up to him ? A mass of tangled hair fell around her shoulders, the curls that under a loving hand would have hung in graceful ringlets, locked and interlocked themselves around a pinched and poverty-sticken face ; the lines on brow and cheek were those of a woman, but the trembling sensitive mouth and pathetic

eyes were those of a child. She was, judging by size, of the age of eight years, though in reality older. A tattered shawl was drawn around the little figure, a garment called by courtesy a dress, much too long in some places, much too short in others where it had been torn away, hung upon her, on her hair, shawl and dress, the moisture of the atmosphere collected and slowly dripped upon the pavement. Bending over the child and touching her on the shoulder to arrest her attention the policeman said kindly,

“Well young ’un, who are you waiting for ?”

“No one, Sir. ”

“Then you had best go ’ome.”

“I’ve no home. ”

“ Where’s your mother ?”

“ She’s dead, Sir, they took her away yesterday, and another woman’s got our room. ”

“What’s your name ?”

“ Agnes Harcourt. ”

"Have you no friends or nowhere to go?"

"No."

She looked so hopeless and forlorn as she stood there, "alone in London" and but half comprehending the awfulness of her position, that accustomed as he was to scenes of poverty and distress, the kind heart was touched, and after a few moments thought, he exclaimed cheerfully,

"Come along then with me, we must see what can be done."

With the trustfulness of childhood Agnes followed him, but seemed to shrink so decidedly from any reference to her past life, that after a few attempts on the part of her conductor to learn something of her history, he desisted, and they walked silently through the crowded streets. They soon reached a large brick building, the door of which stood open; passing up the stairs, and along a corridor, they stopped before one of the doors and the policeman knocked softly. A cheerful voice from

within bade them enter, and taking the child by the hand, he led her into a pleasant room, at the end of which two ladies were seated. They were evidently sisters, and on both faces there was a brightness and peacefulness seldom seen in this busy careworn world.

"Well Mr. Richards, " exclaimed the elder of the ladies, "who have you brought us now?"

"A little lass, Miss, who says she has no 'ome, no mother, no nothing, so I thought I would bring her to you."

"Ah," she said turning smilingly to her sister, "this is the way the Lord answers our prayers. We had a meeting with the dear widows this afternoon to ask Him for the means to provide for the children we have already sheltered, and He sends us another one to care for, it may be to try our faith. But He has proved to us too often that "The Lord's hand is not shortened that it cannot save; neither

his ear weary, that it cannot hear, " for us to doubt Him now.

Agnes had stood gazing wonderingly at the ladies, whose faces were in her eyes as beautiful as angels. Only in the streets at an unmeasurable distance from her, had she seen kind womanly faces and then they had not the love in them that attracted her now. Strange as it may seem Agnes was to hear for the first time words of gentleness and kindness addressed to her. Her short, sad life had been passed among scenes of drunkenness and clamor. Women as she knew them, were loud and angry, and the mother so lately dead lay in a drunkards grave. Would the lady speak to her? If she could only touch her for a moment. Such were the thoughts that occupied her mind while the lady questioned Mr. Richards as to how they might obtain information respecting the child's past life. The answer to these came sooner than she expect-

ed, for the lady, who had been taught by the great Master to see through the covering of poverty and uncleanness the immortal soul beneath, and also learnt by experience the charm of loving touch, called the child to her and putting her arm around the neglected form, drew her tenderly to her side. An electric thrill passed through Agnes as she felt the touch, and the buds of joy and hope which had so long lain folded and chilled in the lonely heart, began slowly to open under the bright influence of Christian love. Taking the grimy hand into her own soft one, the lady looked into the face pinched with want, with that hopeless soberness stamped upon it, so pitiful in childhood, and as she met the brown eyes with their longing and wonder, her own eyes filled with tears, and bending over her she said,

“ My dear child, have you ever heard of the Lord Jesus ? ”

“ No mam.”

"Has no one ever told you about God?"

. "No'm."

"Poor little one. Have you had any one to love you?"

"No" with a mournful droop of the head.

"Would you like to come and live with me, and do what I tell you?"

"Oh! yes'm," with a faint smile in her eyes.

"Then Agnes, I will take you to my home where there are a lot of little girls like you, where you will have plenty to eat and clothes to wear and be taught I hope to grow up a good woman. Will you try and remember that I am doing this for the Lord Jesus' sake, because He loves you and wishes me to care for you?"

A flush of pleasure passed over the wan face as she answered "Yes, thank you 'm, I'll remember."

The kind heart that spoke those words

for Jesus sake," hardly belived that they would sink as deep into the little heart before her as they did, and would never know the power they were to exert on the future life of this little London waif.

Mr. Richards who had listened with interest to this short conversation was now leaving the room with a fervent "God bless you Miss," when the younger lady rose and came towards him.

"Don't forget to-night," she said "to ask the Lord for the ten pounds necessary to send this little one next spring to Canada, and pray for us to be guided in teaching this poor little heathen the knowledge of Him."

He promised, and as he went back to his beat, he raised his heart in prayer to God for sending such devoted women into that dark part of London to receive and care for the orphan and the destitute.

Agnes was now placed in the charge of a pleasant motherly woman under whose

hand quite a transformation soon took place, the old rags were laid off for ever, the tangled curls were cut close to her head and reduced to some sort of order and after a comfortable meal, the first she could remember for years, Agnes knelt down by the side of her neat bed to learn the words of a simple prayer the concluding words of which were, "for Jesus sake." With these words on her lips and the wonder in her heart who this Jesus could be she fell asleep, and so passed away for ever the dark, dreary cloud which had rested on her life since its commencement.

The next day Agnes was taken to the Training Home at Hampton and a new world was opened to her, the atmosphere of which was love and patience. And much of both of these were needed to bring these untrained, wild little ones which were daily added to it, into some kind of order, and to teach them the ordinary duties of civilized life. Agnes had

been so accustomed to wandering aimlessly about for hours idly dreaming, that at first the order and constant activity of the Home was exceedingly irksome; but the wish to please, and the intense desire to learn which was awakened in her, overcome her natural indolence and she made rapid progress. She had naturally a sweet voice and took great delight in learning the hymns which were taught them, and she soon learned much of that all powerful Jesus, whom all around her loved and honored, and for whose sake, many a harsh word was checked, many a kind act done and whose presence and blessing were desired most.

So the months passed by and the seed of truth, diligence and order were soon hopefully and prayerfully in the awakened heart, which in after life would bring forth a rich and abundant harvest.

One bright Spring day in company with forty others, Agnes once more entered

the house in London, which had been opened to receive her when cast alone upon the tender mercies of the world. And what a transformation in mind, character and appearance had taken place since then. With plenty of good food and fresh air the hollow cheeks had filled out, the shrunken form had grown considerably in height, although she was not even now a stout healthy child like many around her. She was not exactly pretty, but any one speaking to her, and seeing her face light up with expression could not but be attracted. Her chief attractions were the wistful brown eyes and light wavy hair. cut short at present, but which would doubtless some day be trained into beautiful ringlets.

A large number have gathered to receive the children and all was bustle and excitement. Each little face is bright with hope and anticipation, for are they not on the eve of departure for Canada that fair land

of promise, where there is room for all, and each one is to have a chance of making for himself a home and perhaps a fortune. The fond hope lies hid in each boyish heart of some day being, what to him is the proudest position in the world, a Canadian farmer. And the girls what are they looking forward to? What are the hopes and aspirations which fill their hearts? Let me try and express the thoughts which are now passing in Agnes' mind, as with parted lips and eager eyes she drank in the words of the lady who was addressing them, the same lady who will always be to her the sweetest best and noblest woman in the world.

If she could only live in the country among the green fields and the birds, see the cattle and help in a farm house, and greatest bliss of all if she should be adopted and have a father and mother, brothers and sisters for herself, life would then be full of pleasure.

For such hopes as these the little emigrants gladly turned their backs upon England and sailed across the seas to the fair West.

CHAPTER II.

“Thomas run down and open the gate for your Master, he’ll be here in a minute and see that there are plenty of oats for Jennie.”

And Mrs. Russell giving a hasty glance at the neatly set table to see that every thing was in order, stepped to the porch and looked rather anxiously down the road. Mr. Russell had gone into a neighbouring town on some business and had promised to bring home with him one of the little English children who had arrived a few weeks before. She had not much confidence in her husband’s wisdom in making such a choice and had several times during the day regretted that she had not accompanied him and seen the

children for herself. She had not long to wait for a team was soon seen coming round a bend in the road, and in a few minutes it had driven into the yard.

"Well, Nellie, here we are safe and sound," said Mr. Russell as he jumped out and lifted a little girl down from the waggon. "This is the child, and if she cannot do anything else she'll be able to sing for us all day long." And taking Agnes kindly by the hand he led her over the threshold of her new home.

Mrs. Russell looked keenly at her with a feeling of disappointment. What possible use would this slight, small creature be to her. How like a man to be taken with a gentle face and sweet voice ! What she had expected at least was a stout, rosy child and one much taller. But she only said.

"I am glad to see you, take off your hat, and sit down while I see about putting away all these parcels."

With quick perception Agnes had read in the eyes looking at her, that she had not produced a favourable impression, and she was disconsolately twisting the ribbon on her hat when a child's cry made her start. In the corner of the room stood a cradle, and Agnes hurrying towards it saw a beautiful boy of eighteen months, who smiled at her and held up his chubby hands to be taken. Ah, here was some one she could love as much as she liked, and who might get to love her. So lifting the baby in her arms she kissed the sweet mouth, and the touch of the tiny hands on her face brought comfort to the lonely heart.

Tea was soon placed on the table, and while Mr. and Mrs. Russell are gossiping about the news of the neighborhood let me try and describe this family who are so intimately associated with Agnes Harcourt's future life. Mr. Russell was a strong hearty farmer of about thirty years

of age with a good-natured easy-going disposition having a kind word for every one and consequently a great favourite with all. Life had always gone smoothly with him, his present beautiful farm of two hundred acres being left to him by an uncle when quite a young man. Mrs. Russell on the contrary was energetic, active, and exceedingly ambitious, and often wearied herself out trying to urge her husband to enter into different plans for the improvement of his position. But he only laughed good-naturedly at her and was content to go on from day to day in the working of his farm. She was a handsome woman, tall and well made, with fair hair and blue eyes; but one felt on looking at her the want of softness or tenderness in her face and manner. Neither of them were at all religious, although Mrs. Russell was very regular in her attendance at church when ever it was possible. But the church was several miles

distant and when it rained in summer, or was too hot, or the horses needed rest, or was stormy in winter or the roads were heavy, or it was too cold, Mr. Russell could never be induced to leave home, so Mrs. Russell often went alone. He was not irreligious or else Agnes would never have been sent to them for even a short time, but like so many who attend to the outward forms of religion, the present world with its cares and prospects was the one absorbing thought. The Bible was to them a sealed book, and the Christian life with its joys and sorrows, its struggles and triumphs, was unthought of, and untrodden ground.

There was another member of the family, for whose sake especially, Mrs. Russell had decided upon getting a little girl. A sister of Mr. Russell's who had hurt her back the winter before when out coasting with a party of others. At first the doctor had not thought it anything

serious but the pain had increased so much that she was at present confined to her room and spent many weary hours, when she could not bear to see or speak to any-one. She had been a teacher for several years and passing suddenly from an active busy life, the dreary monotony of a sick room, so chafed and worried her, that she was fast fretting herself into an irritable invalid. With no Saviour to stand by and lighten the trial by His presence and love, her days were indeed dreary ones.

After the tea things had been cleared away, and while Mrs. Russell was putting Charley to bed, Agnes being left to herself walked down the Avenue to the gate and seating herself on a large stone by the side of it, looked with some curiosity at the surroundings of her present home. It was a fair scene which was spread out before her, one of the lovely spots which are often met with amid the hills and lakes of the

Eastern Townships. It being the end of May the trees were in all the freshness of their spring dress, and the grass covering the fields was luxuriant and beautiful. From the road, the land gradually sloped upward forming a high hill, and back from the farm house, which was of grey stone with a wide verandah running round it, were seen Maple woods with cleared spaces between. On one side of the house was a large orchard and on the other, a kitchen garden. The road which passed the house skirted the shore of Broom Lake and from where Agnes sat it seemed to lie at her feet, so calm and beautiful in the evening light. The trees on the shore and on the islands, were reflected in its calm surface, and the hills which surrounded it were just now covered with the crimson glow of the setting sun.

The sight of the lake recalled to Agnes the Home and friends she had left that day, and where for the past two weeks she

and delighted to sit and watch the shadows of the clouds on its surface ; and a feeling of loneliness and homesickness came over her. Just now they would be having their evening lesson and singing, and while her thoughts flew back to the companions with whom she had passed so many happy hours the words spoken by the lady who had accompanied them from England as she bade her goodbye, seemed to ring in her ears.

“ My dear Agnes, you are going among strangers, but do not forget you are not alone, the Lord Jesus is with you and He is your best friend.”

With almost a start Agnes looked around her, as she repeated the words over to herself. Was it true that the Lord Jesus was by her now, and that He was *her* friend, thought of *her*. It seemed incredible. She had often heard of the love of God, of her sinfulness and the death of Christ for sin but for the first time the thought of a personal interest in it came

to her, and it brought with it such sweetness as to bring tears to her eyes and a rush of joy to her heart. Lifting her eyes to the sky which was all ablaze with crimson and gold, she thought of the heavenly city, with its streets of gold and gates of pearl, where the Lord Jesus was seated at the right hand of the Father. And amidst all its glory He was thinking of her, loving her. With the simple faith of a little child without which no one can enter into the kingdom of God, Agnes joyfully believed the truth which the Holy Spirit had revealed to her, and accepting Christ as her Saviour, her Lord, and her King, passed into the ever increasing family of our Heavenly Father.

She went back to the house with such a bright light in her eyes, and smile on her lips, that Mr Russell passing her smiled and said.

“It’s pretty here, aint it?”

“Yes sir,” she said, but it was not the

natural beauty of the place but the loveliness of her newly found Friend, that had kindled the enthusiasm on her face.

A short time afterwards Agnes went up to her little room at the end of the hall and opening her box in which were all her earthly possessions, proceeded to take them out and put them away. She little thought of the many prayers that had accompanied each article, prayers which had been heard and the answer to which had begun already. Those stockings had been knit by a little girl in the north of England, who had given up several half holidays that she might do something for the poor little girls in London and each evening had asked God to bless the wearer. Those print dresses, had been made by the poor widows in London and many a prayer had accompanied the stitches for the owner in her far off Canadian Home. That neat linen bag with brush and comb with texts of Scripture written on it, had been

made by an invalid lady, a great sufferer but who had wished to do something for the Master and while making them had prayed earnestly for a blessing on His own Word.

The next morning Agnes rose early and throwing up her window was delighted to find that it faced the lake.

How lovely and calm it looked in the morning light, and leaning out of the window she drank in the sweet message which the birds, hills, and trees were telling of the love and goodness of God until her soul was filled with joy and gladness. But God was to speak to her in plainer words than nature can tell, for taking up her daily text book which lay on the window-sill she turned to the verse for the day and read "Be ye followers of God as dear children." That surely cannot mean me the thought, how can I so ignorant and so sinful follow God who is High and Holy? Still there is a verse some where

of following in Jesus footsteps and if I ask Him perhaps he will show me what to do. So with a simple prayer that she might be taught how she could be like Jesus, Agnes went down stairs to begin the duties of her new life.

After breakfast Mrs. Russell handed her a tray saying,

Take this breakfast up to Miss Hellen's room, it is the first to the right at the top of the stairs and see if she wishes you to do anything for her."

The door of the room indicated was closed, so carefully balancing the tray on her hand Agnes knocked softly. Hearing no response she knocked again, when an impatient voice called "come in." In opening the door she jerked her hand so violently that quite a commotion was occasioned among the dishes, but she succeeded in righting the tray before anything was spilt. It was however rather a noisy entrance into a sick room and Helen Rus-

sell evidently thought so for she said sharply,

" You careless child, take care of the dishes, and I guess you must be deaf as well as clumsy for I have been screaming myself hoarse for you to come in, but now you are in suppose you shut the door and don't stand staring like a stupid."

Trembling with nervousness and conscious of her awkwardness Agnes obeyed, but the room being very dark and every thing strange around her, she completed her misfortunes by stumbling over a stool which was in her way and spilling the tea over the tray, so that it was a very dilapidated breakfast which was placed on the table by Miss Russell's bed.

It was one of Hellen Russell's sick days, her head was throbbing with neuralgia, every part of her body was aching, and the least noise and jar added to her discomfort. As she looked at the awkward trembling little figure before her, there was no feeling

of sympathy or toleration in her heart towards the child in her strange home, only annoyance, and when Agnes said hesitatingly,

“I’m very sorry Miss, but can I do anything for you?”

She answered coldly as she looked at her breakfast where the poached egg was floating round in a pool of tea.

“As I usually prefer tea and egg in separate dishes you might try again and see if you can get me something to eat.”

Flushing deeply under the unkindness of the tones, Agnes hurried back to the kitchen, which to her dismay she found empty and Mrs. Russell nowhere to be found. The tea pot was fortunately on the stove and a loaf of bread in the cupboard but this had to be made into toast and how was she to manage that alone. Always accustomed to coal, the wood blazing so brightly in the stove troubled her greatly, and it was very a smoky burnt

slice of bread that was at last carried up to Miss Russell. She pushed it impatiently from her but drank the tea, remarking at the same time on the nuisance of having children about which did not of course help to calm the anger which was rising in Agnes' heart.

"Shall I raise the blind Miss?"

"No." was the short answer you would probably pull it down."

After this rebuff Agnes volunteered no more assistance, but as Hellen really needed the blind raised, she was at last allowed to do it with many injunctions to be careful which only made her more awkward. Then there were the many little things an invalid needs to have done, and although Agnes was usually very neat and handy and had been carefully trained to be useful, there was something in Hellen's sarcastic voice, which so excited and bewildered the child that every thing she touched slipped from her fingers, and the

furniture seemed to be all angles, against which she was continually running. When at last she was released, she rushed to her room, a perfect storm of anger and rebellion was raging in her breast.

"Oh the hateful thing," she said pressing her hands to her hot cheeks "I'll never like her she's too disagreeable, too horrid I wish I could never see her again, and I'll have to wait on her every day, what shall I do!"

Agnes was continuing in this strain when her eyes rested on her brush bag which was hung by the side of the bureau and the text written on it seemed to stand out before her.

"He was oppressed, and he was afflicted yet he opened not his mouth, he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth."

As the Lord walked upon the troubled waters of the Sea of Galilee and at his word there was a great calm—So over the

angry sea of passion raging in this young heart this peaceful majestic vision of the Saviour brought a divine hush.

Startled at the contrast between herself and the Lord Jesus whose follower she had wished to be only a few hours ago, Agnes sat quite still for a few minutes, all anger fading out of her heart and with tears of sorrow and regret, she turned to the Lord for forgiveness and comfort.

She was not allowed to remain long in this sweet communion, for Charley was heard below calling her, and she ran down quite cheerfully to amuse him. Mrs. Russell was busy most of the morning in the dairy. So she had a delightful time getting acquainted with the little boy, and at dinner was quite relieved to hear from Mrs. Russell that she would attend to Miss Russell's wants.

Late in the afternoon as Mrs. Russell was busy at the machine, and Agnes was helping baste the piece of a quilt together

as well as she could with Charley tumbling over her, Mr Russell came in, Agnes looked brightly up at him receiving in return an answering smile, and then an idea seemed to strike him.

"Say Nellie, suppose we give Agnes the charge of the hens and I will go and introduce her to the little chickens now."

"I have no objections, but you must be very careful not to neglect them Agnes if I find you do so I will take it away from you again."

"Oh please do let me ma'am" said Agnes her eyes lighting up with pleasure, "I should like it so much."

"Come along then" Mr. Russell said kindly.

"Me too papa," said Charley stretching up his tiny arms "I want to feed 'ittle chicks."

"Why my little man," said the father as he lifted him in his arms, "you're a little chick yourself, papa's little chick."

"See mama," the child said joyously clapping his hands and laughing loudly, "papa's little chick."

Mrs. Russell rose from her work, a soft light in her face as she looked at her beautiful boy and kissing him fondly as she tied on his hat, said softly "our own darling little chick."

Agnes stood looking at the group, love and tenderness on each face, was she any one's darling? any one's child? The answer to the inquiry was sent quickly by the Holy Spirit, "One is your Father even God." Yes she thought as she turned towards the door, One loves me, Jesus does. And that great Father "who setteth the solitary in families," was even then arranging for earthly love and protection.

It was not a model farm-yard, for Mr. Russell liked so much to see the fowls around the house that he would not let them be enclosed in a yard, much to Mrs. Russell's annoyance. At the side of the

house was a group of trees and under these among the deep grass, boxes were placed, to which the different hens were fastened that they might not wander away with their broods.

"This" said Mr. Russell, pointing at a large gray hen, "is Martha, who always looks well after her chickens, and won't let the ducks steal their food, but Betsey here requires strict watching, as she is so greedy, and only looks after her little ones, when she has had plenty herself. Mary is a good old hen, who always takes any stray one who is just hatched, but she has a great longing for the garden and gets in there when once we let her loose. But see the ducks coming racing along when they see us, the greedy things think we will give them something to eat, and so we will, come and I will show you how to mix the food for the chickens."

When Mr. Russell appeared with two flat tin pans in his hand all the ducks and

hens in the place came trooping around him, and then such a scene ensued. Agnes was stationed at the boxes with the soft food for the young chickens, and all her energies were employed to keep the older ones from stealing their food, while Mr. Russell tried to keep their attention by scattering peas in their path. After much laughing and running about all were fed, and then large flat tins of water were brought and placed in the grass and Mr. Russell and Agnes sat down on a bench placed against one of the trees, to watch the duck and hens perform their toilette. Agnes could not help wondering if Mrs. Russell so methodical and stately whisked about in this undignified fashion, and laughed gently to herself at the idea. But she learned afterwards that when she attended to the fowls, they were all shut in the barn until the young chickens were fed and no such confusion was allowed.

While Charley ran about gathering

bunches of dandelions and bringing them to his father to admire, Mr. Russell turned to Agnes and asked her to sing a hymn.

"Which one sir?"

"Oh, any one, there all pretty, but the one you sang the other day was about a sheep which a shepherd went to find, sing that."

"Ah, The ninety and nine."

And in a clear sweet voice she sang it through. Charley came up to her and with his hand on her lap stood looking at her intently all the time.

"Nice, eh papa, sing more Aggie."

So she sang on one after another of the beautiful Gospel hymns until Mrs. Russell joined them.

"Miss Hellen has been asking for you Agnes you had better go to her." It was with considerable reluctance that she left the pleasant scene to go again into that uncomfortable sick-room. And I am afraid she took much longer than necessary

to mount the stairs but the remembrance of the morning's lesson came back to her and she had just resolved to try and be more gentle and keep all anger out of her heart when she reached the door. It was ajar and Hellen lay on her couch by the window; the day was very warm and the window was partly open, so that she could hear the voices below.

As Hellen caught sight of Agnes she said,

"Come in, what were you singing it sounded very pretty."

"Do you mean *Come to the Saviour?* and she hummed over the tune."

"No it was something about rest. What would I give for a little!"

Such a look of weariness came over her face that for the first time it occurred to Agnes how sad her life was.

"Oh you must mean *Sweet rest in Heaven.*"

"Rest in Heaven," Hellen Russell re-

peated, "yes there will likely be rest then if we ever manage to get there, but it is a long time to wait."

"Why don't you ask Jesus to give you rest now," said Agnes simply "he says Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

"Nonsense," Hellen replied shortly, "God does not perform miracles now, besides I hate to hear such expressions as 'ask Jesus,' 'come to Jesus;' can you read child?"

"Yes'm a little."

"Well hand me that book on the table, *Put yourself in His place* and you can read to me for a while."

Hellen found the page and gave the book to Agnes, but her reading was so imperfect that after stumbling over a few paragraphs, Hellen stopped her saying,

"There that will do, your reading is about on a par with your cooking, so you won't be much use to me in that way, who

taught you to read?"

"Miss Smith at the Hampton Home."

"Have you no mother nor father?"

"No Miss, no one."

"No relation at all?"

"No."

"Then I guess you don't owe the world much."

Agnes looked so wonderingly at her that she repeated.

"You don't owe anyone much."

"Oh yes indeed I do, Miss M——in London was so kind to me I can never forget it and so were all the ladies. They took me when I was in the street, and have given me all I have. Oh they are awfully good people," Agnes said, her eyes filling with tears as she thought of the many kind words and looks received.

"Some people are queer, it seems to me if I was not bothered with children of my own, I would not go hunting round for other people's children to work for. I

wonder what makes them do it."

"They do it for Jesus' sake because it pleases Him, that's what He did when He was here," and Agnes continued blushing deeply as she remembered Hellen's former words, but determined to be loyal to her Master, "He loves them and He loves me too."

This was a new motive to Hellen Russell and one she could not understand, but as she looked at the eager blushing face, she could not utter the mocking words that came to her lips. There is something so touching in the simple faith of a child that few people like to disturb it with their own doubts and unbelief.

"Well I guess I'll read a while," she said turning the conversation, "so you may go."

And Agnes went down stairs wondering what sort of people she had come among; they were not at all like the people she remembered who never spoke about Jesus

and knew nothing about Him. But still no one here seemed to care for Him, there were no prayers morning and evening, and she had not seen a Bible since she came. She did not know that she was to be a little missionary, sent to this family to shew in her simple unconscious way the power and joy of a present Saviour, and the adaptability of the Gospel to our every-day life.

Nor did she know that as Hellen Russell tossed to and fro on her pillow that night, the earnest face of the child who had such faith in Jesus' power kept floating before her, and the words "I will give you rest," repeated themselves in her memory until they seemed to mock her restlessness.

CHAPTER III.

One afternoon as Agnes was returning

from a message to a neighbour, the song of a strange bird enticed her into the wood which skirted the road. She was wandering about from tree to tree unable to find the singer when her attention was arrested by a patch of flowers which lay before her.

"Oh, you beauties," she exclaimed hurrying towards them. "I never saw any thing so pretty." And regardless of the damp earth and moss covered trunks she had to climb over, Agnes wandered from one to another, each seeming larger and prettier than the last, until her hands were filled with spring violets and anemonies. At last remembering that Mrs. Russell might be expecting her, she was going home when she caught sight of a stately orchis, the only one in a large bed of violets. This she must have, so gathering it and carrying the rest in her apron, she hurried home and rushed into the kitchen exclaiming "Look Mrs. Russell what beauties I

have found ! can I have something to put them in ?”

“Yes, they’re very pretty, you may take one of those old saucers, but goodness me child see the mess you have made on my clean floor. Take your boots off at once, and get a cloth and wipe up the mud !”

Laying her treasures carefully down Agnes did as she was told, her ardor rather damped by her cool reception, and then went up to her room to arrange and enjoy the flowers.

Being naturally of an artistic nature with an intense love of everything beautiful, to her these delicate spring flowers were more precious than any toy would have been. It would have amused anyone to see the delight she took in placing them in one position and then another, holding them from her and talking to them as if they were real creatures ; but at last they were arranged to her satisfaction and she discovered that she must try and get a

pitcher for her orchis. While retuning with one she passed Miss Russell's room and a weary sigh fell upon her ear which suggested thoughts that caused the light to die out of her eyes and the pleased smile from her lips. It was a very sober face indeed that hung over the flowers, while her conscience whispered that here was an opportunity to do a kind act, might not these pretty ones bring some pleasure with them into that sick room. It was in vain that Agnes tried to quiet the voice by recalling how trying and disagreeable Miss Russell was, that she was not under any obligation to her, that probably she would not care at all for them, conscience would not be stifled, and when the suggestion was presented what would the Lord Jesus do if He were here? was it much to give this little thing to Him? the victory was won.

"Well, I'll take these violets they're the prettiest but I'll keep this tall yellow one, it will keep fresh for some time." So

pressing her lips lovingly against them she carried them at once to Miss Russell.

If you please Miss, I found these in the wood to-day, would you like to have them on the table here?

"Oh, violets, yes they are very common about here, I have some nice pressed ones in that book yonder," and taking one in her fingers Hellen commenced pulling it to pieces. "How I used to love to analyze these flowers once, I wonder if I shall ever gather them again. Were these all you found?"

"No," Agnes said hesitatingly "I have a tall yellow flower."

"Run and get it for me it may be one I have never seen."

It never occurred to Hellen what she was asking of the child nor did any idea of the sacrifice she was making enter her mind. Self was to her the one engrossing thought, her wishes, wants, troubles, and pains, had been so constantly dwelt upon

that she never seemed to think of the wishes or rights of others.

Agnes left the room very angry and indignant, she did not dare refuse but she felt the selfishness of the request.

"She not only does not care for the others," she said indignantly but will perhaps pull this pretty one to pieces."

Miss Russell did not notice how slowly Agnes brought her the flower, but on seeing it a look of pleasure and interest came over her face.

"Why I believe that is an orchis the one I have been wanting for my collection for some time. I knew they were to be found around here but they are very scarce; yes to be sure, this must be an Orchis Spectáblis or Showy Orchis. Did you find it in the woods? Had it two oblong-obovate shining leaves?"

"Indeed Miss I do not know what kind of leaves those are, but this flower was standing up so tall and graceful between

two lovely long green leaves."

"Yes, yes, the very thing, but how foolish of you not to bring me the leaves you must get them for me."

And without thanks or further notice of the child, to Agnes's dismay Hellen pulled one of the delicately tinted blossoms from its stalk and began to analyze it. Quite satisfied as to its family and name Hellen said,

"Hand that portfolio to me the one on the top of the pile and you can watch me and see how we prepare specimens for an *Herbarium*. There pass me that wadding and the blotting paper."

It would be hard to describe Agnes feelings as she watched the process and saw the delicate leaves flattened out and destroyed, as she thought between the leaves of the book and then had to place a weight on it to crush out all its life. It was hard to restrain the tears but she fought bravely with herself and by recall-

ing a verse that had been in her thoughts often that day "We ought not to please ourselves," and persuading herself that this was a fine opportunity of carrying it out she succeeded in regaining her cheerfulness.

During the few weeks that had elapsed since Agnes entered not only her new home but a new spiritual life she had tried to follow simply what she thought would please her new Heavenly Master, and had never lost the consciousness of His presence and protection, and was fast winning the respect and affection of those around, beside being herself very happy and contented.

"I think that it would be a good idea if I were to give you lessons in Botany," Hellen said after a few minutes, "you might gather the specimens and I will explain them to you. It would be something to interest me, and an advantage to you."

"Yes Miss," Agnes answered rather

doubtfully

"Then we'll begin to-morrow."

"But hark is not that Mrs. Russell calling?"

"Oh yes, I have to go and set the table for tea."

When she went down stairs Mrs. Russell greeted her with,

"Well Agnes where have you put your flowers?"

"I gave them to Miss Hellen."

"If that is not just like a child, crazy about a thing one minute and tired of it the next."

This was rather too bad, and Agnes exclaimed hastily "Indeed that was not the reason."

"What was it then, you and Hellen are not such friends that you would be anxious to please her are you?"

Agnes stood for a second debating whether she would tell the real reason and then said with an effort,

"It was because I thought it might please the Lord Jesus, not for Miss Helen's sake but for Jesus' sake."

"What a queer child you are to be sure. But hurry now and set the table, Mr. Russell will be here in a minute," and Mrs. Russell left the room, though with some admiration for that *queerness* which make people so pleasant to live with.

As soon as the tea things were cleared away, Agnes went out to attend to her numerous family who were calling aloud for their supper. She had just finished feeding them when Mr. Russell passed.

"Want to come up the hill with me?"

"Oh yes, sir, I'll ask Mrs. Russell if I may." And hurrying into the house Agnes soon returned with the desired permission.

Quite at her ease when with him, Agnes ran along by his side, amusing him with her questions and remarks, and relating the wonderful things Charley had said and done during the day, all so interesting to

them. They had reached one of the clearings half way up the hill and stopped to look at the picture spread out before them when Agnes said abruptly,

“Mr. Russell, is there a Bible in the house?”

“Well I suppose there must be one around somewhere, but what in the world do you want with a Bible, won't the prayer books do as well?”

“No, I can't find what I want in them. I have a prayer book Miss Hellen said I might use, and my hymn-book, and text-book but they are not the same as a Bible.”

“They have not got the stories about Joseph and David and the rest I suppose, I used to like to read those too on Sunday when I was a child. But there are other stories around that you can have, just as interesting.”

“That is not what I want” Agnes said, in her quiet sober way, “it is a verse I want to find, I used to hear it so often in

England, but I have forgotten just how it goes, " We ought not to please ourselves, for Christ pleased not himself, " "Something like that. "

" Well, said Mr. Russell smiling I guess most people have forgotten that verse entirely if they ever heard it, why you know, little sober-sides that the motto for the world is 'every man for himself and God for us all. '

" Is it ! I don't think that is half as nice, because when we go to meet Jesus, He, won't say to such people 'Come ye blessed of my Father,' " Won't you be glad when we shall see Jesus as the disciples did and to be with him all the time ! "

" I don't know, I have not thought much about it, " Mr. Russell answered, but he had an uncomfortable recollection that there were those to whom Christ would say 'Depart,' and his conscience whispered which class would he be among. But with his habit of never thinking of un-

pleasant things, he dismissed the thought, and he and Agnes were soon talking about other things.

CHAPTER IV.

“Can I take Charley and go down the road to meet Mr. Russell!” Agnes asked one afternoon, “every thing is ready for tea and he will be here soon.”

“Certainly not,” Mrs. Russell answered, “Charley would be sure to soil his clean dress and be a sight when his father got here.”

So the children had to restrain their impatience and content themselves with running up and down the veranda and looking eagerly for the first glimpse of the team on the road. Mr. Russell had been away for a few days, having business to attend to in Montreal, and the house had been dreary and lonesome enough. A shout from Charley announces his arrival

and soon he is in the sitting room greeting all in his hearty merry way.

“Well Nelly this is indeed a pleasant home to come to after the dust and noise of those miserable city streets. How has everything gone on, Charley been well and this little lass a good useful girl?”

“Oh yes,” was the answer everything has been all right except, that Agnes nearly spoilt a whole pot of preserves this morning, but I fortunately came in just in time to save all my strawberries from being spoilt.”

Agnes blushed and hung her head at the reflection of the morning's misfortune, and Mr. Russell said kindly,

“It is fortunate that nothing very serious happened and we will hope for better luck next time. But come let us have supper and while it's getting ready I'll run up and see Hellen I've got some new books for her.”

The occurrence referred to happened in

this way. While Agnes was attending to a new brood of chickens and had just deposited their food on the floor of their box when Mrs. Russell called to her to come into the kitchen. Looking round to see that none of the older ducks and chickens were round, she went, and was told to stir a pot of strawberries which were boiling on the stove. As she stood by the stove she could see through the window, the green where the chickens were, so that when a lot of ducks who had escaped from the yard made a raid upon the food, it was more than she could stand, so throwing down the spoon she rushed to the rescue. What was her dismay when returning to the kitchen she found it full of smoke and Mrs. Russell lifting the pot from the stove.

"I thought you were to be trusted," Mrs. Russell said in her hardest tones, "but I find I am mistaken ; and here is all my fruit ruined."

Agnes stood hopelessly by unable to offer

any excuse and deeply distressed at the mischief she had done. It was some slight relief to hear that all was not lost, but when she ventured to ask to be allowed to watch the preserves and humbly promised never to move, Mrs. Russell would not be conciliated and told her to go and play as that was what she seemed to think they had got her for, that it was a hard thing that no one could be trusted and so on until Agnes was reduced to the depths of misery. The morning was a most unhappy one, but after dinner the clouds passed away from the domestic horizon and the sunshine was restored.

While Agnes was sorting the parcels in the store-room after Mr. Russell's return, he came in and seeing her said pleasantly,

"See little woman, here's something for you, the Bible you wanted, and when you find that verse you must read it to me, there is no doubt the world would be much happier and we much better if we

only thought of it more. ”

“ Thank you so much, is it for my very self ? ”

“ Yes, and here’s something else for your very self too, I was at Knowlton to-day and called to see the ladies at the Home, to tell them how you were, and Miss Smith gave me me this letter and parcel of books for you. ”

“ Oh thank you, thank you, are they all well sir ? ”

“ Yes all well, and Miss Smith promised to come and see you soon. ”

“ Oh, ” said Agnes drawing a long breath, “ that will be so lovely. ”

And then as Mr. Russell left her she sat down on a box by the window and read the affectionate words of interest in her welfare, assuring her again of God’s love and care for her, telling how she might please and serve Him, and urging a constant study of His Word.

Thus do these noble women bind in one

golden chain of love the numerous hearts and lives settled in many a farm house in our land, binding them not only to themselves but to the great Father, and seek to spread abroad in this way the knowledge of His love.

Hellen Russell's promise to teach Agnes was not forgotten, and soon became a source of pleasure to both of them and a great bond of union. Hellen soon discovered, that her little pupil lived in an entirely different world of thought from herself and the freshness and simplicity of her remarks, and her firm belief in the reality of the future world, which was such an uncertainty to Hellen, soon interested her very much.

Agnes was not an extraordinary child by any means, but hearing for the first time at the age of ten, of the people and facts of the Bible, from those who had implicit belief in them, they had become to her as real as the events that transpired around

her. Heaven was as real a place to her as England, Jesus as real a person as any one she met. The commands of Christ were to be as simply followed as any thing Mrs. Russell might tell her to do. So to one who had been brought up with perfect indifference to these things, Agnes was unconsciously a new and strange study. A new interest sprang up in Hellen's life, she began to look forward to the hours when they were together, to learn to love the gentle unselfish child ; and Agnes with her quick affectionate nature responded at once to the first word of kindness, and learned to have pity for and patience with one so greatly tried. Often when Hellen was most irritable and unreasonable, she would notice how quickly Agnes gave up her own wishes and with what patience she would try again and again to please. But the motive of it was all incomprehensible.

After the botany lessons were over, it

soon became the habit for Agnes to read aloud for a short time to improve her reading, and by and by the books she had brought with her, full of religious truth and teaching, were allowed to be read to Hellen. Then often in the evening as the twilight was coming on, Hellen would send for Agnes to sing to her, and the singing would sometimes lead to long talks about the subject of the hymns. So daily the precious seed was sown, the small hand scattering it quietly and prayerfully; would it bring forth fruit in the coming days?

“In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thy hand : for thou, knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good.”

CHAPTER V.

Summer had passed quickly by, the

grain had been harvested, the fruit gathered in, and the trees with their gorgeous, changing color, making the hills seem like vast gardens, told too surely of the arrival of Autumn. No outward changes of any striking character have taken place in the Russell's quiet home, but the week on which we again take up the thread of Agnes' history a decision had been arrived at which would materially affect her future.

Mr. Russell had become so deeply attached to the child that he had several times expressed a wish to his wife to adopt her as their own, but had met with little encouragement from her. However lately Hellen had added her persuasions to Mr. Russell's and Mrs. Russell had at last consented to his writing to Agnes' guardians offering to adopt her. And now the afternoon had arrived when the friends from the Distributing Home are expected, to formally give up the child to her new

friends.

"Look at that child Nelly, she has been standing motionless with her hands clasped together for the last fifteen minutes, staring down the avenue as if she expected to see an angel. She is strangely excited to-day although she looks so quiet; she came to me a little while ago to ask if I didn't think they would never come, and said, her eyes shining like stars, that s'he thought she was too happy."

"Poor little thing I am afraid she is expecting too much, she is so imaginative. I hope we will not repent adopting her, and that she will repay us for all our trouble. She is a good enough child but so fond of dreaming away her time like she is doing at present; it puts me out of all patience with her."

So rising Mrs. Russell knocked sharply at the window pane to attract Agnes' attention, and bade her go and get something to do.

Hellen Russell who had called her sister's attention to the child, smiled slightly as she took up some light fancy work she was doing, "I wonder" she thought "if Nelly ever remembers how she felt when she was a child, its work, work with her all the day."

Agnes entered the room very slowly, and walking over to Hellen seated herself on a stool by her side, and listlessly took up some sewing.

"What was the text you read to me this morning Aggie? Hellen said, softly touching the clouded cheek.

Agnes looked up quickly and the shadow passed from the upturned face "Oh yes I forgot, 'let patience have her perfect work' but that's hard to do isn't it?"

"Very."

Had Hellen been learning anything of this lesson during the past summer, and was it this that had taken away the sarcastic peevish lines about the mouth, and

subdued the impatience and irritation in her manner? Yes; gradually she had been led to turn her thoughts from the unsatisfactory things of this world, to the satisfying realities which Christ offers to believers, and the precious seed of the Word, sown in ground prepared by the Spirit, was springing up and bringing in the promised harvest. There had been no sudden conversion as in some cases, but the proud rebellious spirit that had so ignorantly struggled against the Divine Hand that was leading her, had been taught by the Spirit to see the love beneath the pain, and to recognize in the Lord Jesus One "strong to heal" and "mighty to save." She gladly laid at His feet the life that had been such a struggle, and received in return the *rest* so long sighed for and which is part of the inheritance of the Lord's people here. A measure of returning health had also been granted to her, so that every day she could be carried

down stairs in her brother's strong arms, and spend several hours in the family room. They were seated there now expecting the visitors from Knowlton. Mr. Russell had come in, and they were about to sit down to tea when Agnes' quick ears caught the sound of wheels, and Miss Smith accompanied by another lady was soon among them. She had fulfilled her promise of seeing Agnes in the summer so she was not an entire stranger to the family, they had retained a most pleasant memory of her visit; and once when Mr. and Mrs. Russell had been to Knowlton on a picnic, they had taken Agnes and left her to have a delightful long day with some of the companions that had accompanied her from England, but the connection that had been so pleasant was now about to be severed.

When they were seated at the table and after the conversation had turned on the ordinary topics Mr. Russell said,

“ I hear you are returning to England

Miss Smith, why do you not stay and see our Canadian winter ?

“ I would like very much to do so but duty calls me home. There is so much to be done in London, many little boys and girls to be rescued this winter. You can have no conception here, where you have room enough and to spare, of the overcrowding there, the thousands of children growing up the associates of these and vile characters in utter ignorance of God or virtue. We feel that if we can only get them entirely away from their old associates that there is every likelihood of their being trained to be useful men and women.”

“ Well if you only turn out all of them like Agnes we will have nothing to complain of for your bringing them here.”

“ We do not expect that. Some have turned out badly, and given us great anxiety and trouble but we know this, that if we left them where they are they are cer-

tain to go to ruin, and if we take them there is always the chance of saving them."

"That is true," Mr. Russell said, and there is one thing I like very much that you teach your children, the number of beautiful hymns. Why Agnes has taught this little fellow of mine several of them off by heart, they are singing about the house all the day. Come here Charley and sing something for this lady."

Charley hid his face in his father's arm too bashful to look up, but after much coaxing by Agnes and a promise from her to help him, he sang in his sweet childish treble that favorite children's hymn

Jesus loves me this I know,
For the Bible tells me so,
Little ones to Him belong,
They are weak but He is strong.

"There" Mr. Russell said proudly when he had finished, "could anything be pret-

tier than that."

"It is very sweet" Miss Smith answered, and our little ones cannot learn too young the truth of Jesus' love. Often when I have been tired and discouraged that childish hymn sung by the children has rested and comforted me more than I can tell. We bigger children need to remember that though we are weak "He is strong."

Mr. Russell remained silent, he did not like to say how often he had stopped to listen when Agnes was explaining the hymns to Charley or telling him simple Bible stories, and had felt a growing desire to know more of these things, but so it was. As soon as tea was finished, as Miss Smith had promised to spend the night at a farmhouse a few miles distant, where another of the English children were placed, the necessary papers were drawn up and signed and Agnes duly received into Mr. Russell's family to be treated as his own

child and to receive his name.

It would be impossible to describe Agnes' feeling as she stood by and watched them, and when Mr. Russell took her in his arms and kissing her tenderly said,

"Now you are to be my own little girl, Charley's sister," she surprised him by throwing her arms about him and bursting into tears. Her heart was too full for words.

Then kneeling down Miss Smith commended them all to the care of the Great Father, and prayed for the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit in that home.

Before leaving, Miss Smith had a quiet half hour with Agnes, who could open her heart freely to her. She gave her as a parting gift a beautifully illuminated card with the words "For Jesus Sake." "There" she said as she placed it on the wall at the foot of Agnes' bed. "As your eyes rest on this morning and evening may you ever be reminded, not only what others

have done for you for Jesus' sake but what He asks you to do for others. Let this be your motto in life, and God's blessing will rest on you and He will make you a blessing to those around you."

They all gathered on the veranda to see the visitors off, and as Agnes stands there, her hand in Mr. Russell's, her face bright with happiness, we must take our last look at her for a time, trusting that whatever lies before her in the future, she may never lose her childlike faith in God, and may ever be a little missionary, carrying out the command of our Lord.

"Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in Heaven."

THE END.

